

The Heartbeat of 
The Remnant

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A ministry of
The Berean Voice 



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"The Berean Voice" is an outreach ministry of Faith Christian Fellowship, a church located in Holmes County, Ohio. It is operated by a board of directors, which ultimately answers to the elders of the church.

As a non-profit ministry, we desire to work with the Lord, for without Him we can do nothing. We are trusting God to provide for the ongoing work of this magazine and our other outreach projects through the free-will offerings of His people. Would you join us in prayer for this work and ongoing need?

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~ The Berean Voice Board

It is our goal that the content of this magazine bring honor and glory to God. All Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted. In the event of discovering any errors in content or detail, please count it to our oversight and kindly bring it to our attention.

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And he [Jesus] spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that **summer is now nigh at hand**. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that **the kingdom of God is nigh at hand** –Luk 21:29-31.

Summer truly is upon us; and the trees have shot forth. What an interesting term for our modern-day English language, yet we still understand its meaning and have a mental picture of what is happening—the leaves pushing out from places that over winter were bare. For me, I think it is easier to have this mental picture since I have seen time-lapse videos of plants growing or sprouting to life.

Anyway, so much for that. What about the rest of this verse? (...when ye see these things come to pass, know ye

that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.) Surely most of us continue to see the end of time approaching—the wars and rumors of wars, the earthquakes, the political upheaval in nation after nation, societies moving further and further away from God, and churches and families being ravished by sin and scandal.

We have God’s own promise that what we know and experience here on this earth was designed, created, and expected by Him to be only a temporary reality. *And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail* –Heb 1:10-12.

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Weekend Meetings—July 26-28, 2019

Fairview Reception Center | 141 Jackson Rd | Lebanon, PA 17042

Biblical Answers & Prevention for Struggles in the Church

Due to the nature and content, these meetings will be for adults only (ages 18 & older)

Speakers: Mark Miller of Dundee, OH and Curvin Wenger of Dalton, OH

Friday Afternoon

- 1:00 Opening, Announcements, & Song
- 1:30-2:30 Understanding the Heart—The Root of ALL Problems (of human behavior) –Curvin
- 3:00-4:00 The Gospel—God’s Answer for ALL Issues of the Spirit & Soul (psyche) of Man –Mark
- 4:30 Supper

Friday Evening

- 6:00-7:00 How Psychology & Worldly Philosophies Affect Us Today –Curvin
- 7:30-8:30 Practical Discipleship—Effectively Helping People Change –Mark

Saturday Morning

- 8:45 Opening, Announcements, & Song
- 9:00-10:00 A Biblical Understanding of Mental Disorders (ADHD, ODD, OCD, MDD, Bipolar, & RAD) –Curvin
- 10:30-11:30 Biblically Evaluating Adoption & Fostering Issues (FASD & Childhood Development) –Mark
- 12:00 Lunch

Saturday Afternoon

- 1:30-2:30 Understanding the Placebo (sugar pill) Effect and A Safe Use of Psych Meds –Curvin

- 3:00-4:00 Panel Discussion to respond to questions
- 4:30 Supper

Saturday Evening

- 6:00-7:15 A Biblical Understanding of Addictions, Moral Failure, Pornography, and Sexual Abuse –Curvin

Sunday Morning—Everyone goes to their own church

Sunday Afternoon

- 2:45 Opening, Announcements & Song
- 3:00-4:00 Purity—From the Cradle to Conversion, then on to Marriage or Singlehood (for Parents only) –Mark
- 4:10-4:30 Q & A session
- 4:30-5:45 Supper

Sunday Evening

- 6:00-7:00 Preventing & Addressing Problems Through Maintaining Godly Homes –Curvin
- 7:30-8:30 Preventing & Helping ALL of Life’s Struggles Within the Local Church –Mark

Due to limited seating and meals being provided, **registration is required** for these meetings. For registration or for lodging, contact Rudy Yoder: (717) 450-8640 or email: theyoders@yoderhome.net

The Strength of Covenant

Donald Brechbill
Chambersburg, PA

If marriage is a covenant, what is the significance of covenant relationship? What makes it a covenant relationship, and how does this differ from any other relationship? These are answers that we must pursue if we are to understand the permanence of marriage and if we are to successfully navigate the rocky shores of a troubled marriage.

Covenant in our society has become archaic. The cultural revolution of the sixties has made divorce culturally acceptable, and life-long fidelity in marriage has become the exception rather than the rule. Unfortunately, this blight has infected most mainstream churches and is currently invading our Anabaptist churches.

Covenant is God's idea. He is the primary covenant maker. His holy name "Jehovah" indicates that God is always true to His word. The Hebrew origin of "Jehovah" is *yeh-ho-vaw*. This word combines two Hebrew verbs of being. A most literal translation for the name *yeh-ho-vaw* would be (is is) or as God said to Moses "I am that I am."

God's name "Jehovah" indicates that God is always true to His word, that he cannot lie, and that He is true to His character. James states it this way: *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning* –Jas 1:17.

What makes a covenant?

Careful investigation of scripture will reveal that there are three key elements in the establishment of a covenant.

- Words
- Witnesses
- That which ratifies the covenant

Words

Words define the terms and conditions of a covenant. It is very important that the terms and conditions of the

covenant be clearly defined and understood by both parties involved. When God made covenant with Abraham, He spake and said, *And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee* –Gen 17:7.

When God made covenant with the nation of Israel at Mt Sinai, He gave them the Law which was the terms and conditions of the Mosaic covenant.

In our Bibles today we have the Old and the New Testament. This refers to the Old and the New Covenant. In the New Testament we have the teachings of Jesus and His Apostles which supersede the Old Testament law. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said repeatedly, "You have heard that it hath been said, but I say unto you."

The Hebrew writer had this to say about the New Covenant: *But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises* –Heb 8:6.

On our wedding day we use words with precise meaning to establish a covenant that is binding "...till death do us part." Wedding vows may contain some variation but should always include a commitment to a mutually loving relationship that is binding for life, and thus irrevocable.

Witnesses

Another important part of a covenant is the witnesses. Witnesses provide validation and accountability to the vows that have been made. This is especially true of a covenant made between two people.

When Joshua re-established the covenant with Israel upon entering the land of Canaan, he challenged them: *And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses* –Jos 24:22. What they were



saying was that, “We will hold one another accountable for the commitments that we are making today.”

Regarding the New Covenant, we have the testimony of the Apostle John where he says: *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one* –1Joh 5:7-8. Here John is saying that in this New Covenant between God and man there are three witnesses in heaven and three witnesses in earth, and these witnesses all agree.

In the establishment of a marriage covenant the wedding guests are the witnesses. Every guest becomes a witness of the vows that are made. By their presence and blessing, they validate the marriage and become personally responsible to ensure that this marriage endures.

This community commitment to the permanence of marriage is the moral fabric of our society and our churches. When a society becomes negligent in enforcing the permanence of marriage, chaos and confusion ensue. We see this in the society around us. Unfortunately, we are also seeing an increasing number of marriage breakups within our Anabaptist churches.

That which ratifies the covenant

The final step in establishing a covenant is that which ratifies and renders binding and effective the terms of the covenant. Historically there have been a variety of methods of binding a covenant. Ancient Bedouins had a practice of using salt to bind a covenant. Each party would give to the other a measure of salt. The salt was mixed with their respective stores of salt making it impossible to ever separate “my salt” from “your salt.” This symbolized the immutability of this treaty.

Then there was the practice of *berith*. *Berith* is a Hebrew word that means “to cut.” In ancient Israel a covenant was

ratified by “cutting a covenant.” This practice is clearly illustrated in Genesis 15 where God ratified His covenant with Abraham. Abraham asked God, ...*Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?* –Gen 15:8. God’s response to Abraham’s plea was ...*Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon* –Gen 15:9. Abraham took these animals and divided them in the midst and lay them out as a sacrifice to God. God reaffirmed His covenant with Abraham (with words), and then in verse 17, we have this mysterious event: *And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces* –Gen 15:17. This was “berith” or the “cutting of the covenant.” This ceremony ratified and rendered binding the terms and conditions of the covenant. After this event, we have no record that Abraham ever questioned or doubted the promise of God, although he did take it into his own hands to bring that promise to fruition.

When God made covenant with Israel at Mt Sinai, ... *Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words* –Exo 24:8. This blood rendered binding and effective the terms and conditions set forth in the law—this was the Old Covenant.

When God made covenant with you and I at Mt Calvary, the blood of Jesus became the ratifying evidence or the binding token of His New Covenant with us. When we partake of the communion, we are commemorating the covenant that we have with God through Christ.

What ratifies the marriage covenant? As we have already seen, in a marriage we have words (the vows), and we have witnesses (the guests). Does this complete the marriage? No. The marriage is not complete until there is a coming together in physical intimacy. This completes or, as we sometimes say, consummates the marriage covenant. This

is that which ratifies and renders binding and permanent the terms and conditions of the marriage covenant. Early on in Scripture we have example of this. *And Adam knew Eve his wife... Gen 4:1*. Then later on we see another example, *And Isaac brought her [Rebekah] into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her... -Gen 24:67*. Physical oneness belongs to covenant. This is why such a relationship outside of marriage is sin. Fornication or adultery takes that which God has ordained to be inextricably linked to marriage and adulterates the covenant.

When a married couple comes together in physical union they are commemorating and celebrating their marriage covenant. This is the start of them establishing a biblical “one flesh” reality. From this blessed union new life emerges in the form of precious “little ones” and of hearts that are renewed by the power of love.

When we partake of the bread and the wine of communion we are commemorating and celebrating our covenant relationship with Christ. From this blessed oneness new life emerges in the form of hearts that are renewed by the power of love. This is the strength of covenant.

Where these three elements exist—vows, witnesses, and that which ratifies—we have a covenant relationship. How does a covenant relationship differ from any other relationship?

A commitment to fidelity

Some of the most noble words that human lips can utter are “I promise to love you till death do us part.” On our wedding day these words are easy to utter, and we may be most sincere when we speak them. The fact is that no one can possibly know what those words may cost in the course of a lifetime.

Love is a choice and must become established and endure as an every day walk of life. We must choose to direct our affection toward the one of our covenant love and away from the enticements of others. Many, many marriages are destroyed through infidelity.

God has designed marriage to be powerfully bonding. The spiritual, emotional, and physical attachment of marriage creates an inseparable bond. In Genesis we read *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh -Gen 2:24*. The word *cleave* in this verse denotes “being welded or glued together in such a way as to be inseparable.”

To break the marriage bond through infidelity causes rending and wounding to both parties. Satan, the great deceiver, would have us to believe that being unfaithful to our spouse will somehow benefit us. This is a huge lie.

A commitment to faithfulness

God demonstrated covenant faithfulness in his dealings with His Old Testament bride—the nation of Israel. She was not true to her covenant vows. She turned from the worship of Jehovah, and she bowed her knee to pagan altars. Despite her unfaithfulness, God continued to pursue her and call her back unto himself. Israel’s unfaithfulness did not alter God’s faithfulness. This is the strength of covenant love. Covenant love is not contingent upon the actions of the other party. Covenant love persists even though it is not reciprocated. This is a kingdom concept. Paul taught, *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head -Rom 12:20*. Would this principle not most aptly apply to a broken marriage?

The strength of covenant can only be fully realized through an understanding of the divine love of God for us. Our salvation is dependent upon God’s perfect love for us. He continues to love us even though our love for Him is sometimes flawed. His unfailing love continues to draw us back unto himself. The strength of covenant in marriage is found in seeking to emulate this divine love. This divine love will not be found in romance novels or other books on marriage. This divine love can only be found in an intimate relationship with “The Source” of undying love.



Nearly 43 years ago, on a warm August afternoon, two 19-year-olds (a young woman and her fiancé) excitedly came out of her parents' home and walked slowly down a small hill toward a group of 200 waiting people. Her father, a minister, awaited them at the front of the aisle. Flushed with excitement they stood before him and listened to the short message he had prepared concerning marriage. Their hearts beating with anticipation they joyfully answered, "I do," making a covenant with each other and with God.

They both understood what it meant to remain faithful "through sickness and health, poverty and wealth, for better or worse, till death do us part." Generations before had shown them that it was possible. Parents and siblings had shown them. Uncles and aunts had shown them. This was going to be bliss into life's sunset... Or so they thought.

It never entered their minds that great trials would test the very core of their belief and commitment. They went through hard financial times. (The balance in the checkbook was less than the bills that were due.) They went through times of life-changing decisions. (He wanted to quit his job working for his father-in-law building cabinets, receiving a regular paycheck, and begin farming with his father, which didn't guarantee any income each week, let alone each year. She wasn't so sure.) They had four children by this time and knew the challenge of crying babies and sleepless nights, which left everyone exhausted. They knew the differences that came up from time to time in church meetings that left them wondering which way they should think. (One brother thought one way and another thought differently, yet this couple respected both brothers.) Twelve years of experiences were behind them; still, married life was blissful and happy. Life's sun was shining brightly!

Then it happened... The clouds began to roll in thick, angry waves! Eight years of misery and dysfunction were ahead. The devil was hard at work to destroy the unity and joy of these two whose marriage was going so beautifully. He allowed his heart and eyes to look at the allurements of the world and the deception of Satan. Her strong opinions and domineering attitude only added to the problem. Sparing the details, they lost the bliss they once enjoyed. It was a miserable existence for both of them. He was neither repentant nor asking forgiveness, but she continually forgave and pointed the children (five by now) to "we hate the sin, but we love our daddy." After many years of broken oneness, her commitment to "whither thou goest, I will go" began a miracle. God's grace was sufficient.

Why are they so happy now?

First, it must be said, it was the power of God working in both of their lives. God didn't give up on them. He said He wouldn't; and He didn't. They were tempted but they didn't go where Satan wanted them to go. They both have experienced

the power of the Holy Spirit to bring them to depths of spiritual communion that they never knew before. It took many heart-wrenching prayers for strength and forgiveness. It took many deep, heartfelt tears of repentance and close accountability to each other. Many and much!

Secondly, as they look back to that time in their lives, there were four principles of God's Word that were engrained so deeply into their minds that they couldn't deny them:

1. A covenant with God is powerful and cannot be broken.
2. Unconditional love for another person is powerful.
3. Real and ongoing personal repentance is powerful.
4. Living a life (moment by moment) of forgiveness is powerful.

When those four God-ordained choices enter a war between the will of God and the wiles of the enemy, the enemy is powerless.

A covenant with God is undeniably unbreakable. When "the books are opened" the covenant will not have changed.

Unconditional love means loving even when it's not so easy. Fires have a tendency to go out when they have cold water thrown on them. It requires a lot of staying really close to Jesus! Ann's prayer and plea to God was "Lord, please draw Mark back to You by the power of Your Holy Spirit." God answered!

When I, Mark, realized what I was losing, both in eternity and in this life with my family, and the depth and sinfulness of my sin, I trembled before God. He brought me to repentance. God began a healing that was exceeding and abundantly above all that Ann and I had ever thought or asked. My deep, heart-wrenching, grief-stricken repentance was real and obvious to her and the family. I took 100% of the blame. Everyone knows "there are always two sides to the story," yet as the one who had committed the sin, I took full responsibility for my sin and the chaos that was brought into the marriage. I never blamed her for my sin. Humility is not difficult when it is heartfelt and Holy Spirit-guided!

My, Ann's response to Mark's repentance was full and free forgiveness. His ongoing expression of repentance and the fact that he took all the blame was powerful in rebuilding trust. It was clear that God was blessing our marriage again! The sun was shining through clouds that were rapidly receding!

Today, 23 years later, photos of that season in our lives or some reminiscent moment is apt to wash up fresh tears of grief and repentance for the pain and wasted years. Ongoing repentance and ready forgiveness have proven beautiful in building trust and a relationship that is sweeter and stronger than ever before! God truly has fulfilled His promise to ... *restore to [us] the years that the locust hath eaten!* (Joel 2:25a) Praise the Lord!



Trust in the Lord

-with all thine heart

Barry Grant
Arcahaie, Haiti

If we step back and look at our own life, can we honestly say that we trust in the Lord with all our heart? I often think of my children—they trust in me with all their hearts; there is no fear within them; they do not worry. My prayer is that I can trust in my Heavenly Father in the same way.

Here in Haiti a lot of people are driven by fear. They fear the uncertainty of tomorrow. They fear whether they will find food, work, and clothing. It is the opposite of trusting in God. In the western culture, people don't fear those things. Food and clothing are easy to find, jobs are plentiful, and medical assistance is just one 911 call away.

The poor people here in Haiti say that it would be easier to trust God if they were in America, but is that truly the case? While very few in America fear whether they will have enough to eat, many fear whether they will be accepted by other people. There are some who may fear having enough money to live, but there are many who fear death. Whatever our fear is, trusting in God is our answer.

Let's look at the life of David. David was a young boy. When his older brothers went to battle, young David went out to feed his father's sheep. On the battlefield, there was a giant with the Philistine army named Goliath. He challenged the Israelites by saying that if one man would come out and fight him, the victor's army would rule the other side. In 1 Samuel 17:10-11 we read that Goliath said, *...I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.*

Later on, we read that Jesse, David's father, sent him to the place of battle to take some food to his older brothers. David arrived at the place of battle, and he heard Goliath speaking these same words. When David saw that the men of Israel were all afraid, he did not understand. Why were God's people afraid of this uncircumcised Philistine?

Even though David was young, he was no amateur when it came to putting his trust in God. While he was watching his father's sheep, most likely he talked much with God, asking Him to help guard the sheep. One day a bear came out to attack the sheep, and David killed the bear. Another day a lion came out to eat some sheep. Again, the God-trusting, fearless youth faced the threat and killed the lion. Now, facing a seemingly greater threat, David simply asks, *... who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? -1Sa 17:26.* David went to King Saul and said, *I ...will go and fight with this Philistine -1Sa 17:32.* Once more putting his trust in his God, David took five smooth stones, ran out to meet the giant, and killed him. Upon seeing this sudden turn of events, the people marveled.

According to Psalm 20:7, when we put our trust in horses and chariots, then it is not in *the Lord our God*. In Matthew 21:21, the Bible says that with faith we can move mountains. Here in Haiti I have found myself in tough situations where God is my only option. When I have been forced to put my trust in God, I have discovered that He still works miracles. Just like David with the lion, the bear, and the giant, we too can learn that trusting God with our whole heart is the best way and not just a last resort. When we trust in the Lord

first, we show the world something amazing—that this God we serve is alive, and that He is real.

Here in Haiti there was a man living in a shack up in the mountains with his wife and three young children. But there was a problem—he was deathly ill. One day he heard about a missionary who often traveled through the mountains. I received a message from him stating that he was almost dead and that he needed me to come and pray for him. I quickly went up to his home. I was amazed at his condition. His weight was probably not much more than 70 pounds. His wife told me that he had been in bed for over a year. He couldn't talk, he only whispered with deep agonizing breaths. We spent quite a while discussing his life, his sin, and his future. He told me that if God would heal him, he would serve him and trust him for the rest of his life. I believed his sincerity, yet I was scared. I began to pray, but it was certainly not a powerful prayer full of faith. Rather it was a weak, humble cry.

As I went home and throughout that night, he was all I could think about. The devil began his attack. I had many confusing, troubling thoughts, "Did you do everything you could have done? What if he dies? Why didn't you take him to the hospital?" I went to God in prayer. "Oh God," I prayed, "this man wanted prayer. He didn't ask for a hospital; he didn't ask for medication. Please God, heal this man. If he dies, what will I do the next time? O Father, if not for him, please, heal him for me. I need you to, Father."

I prayed like I had never prayed before, and then, God gave me peace. The next morning, I hurried up the mountain to his home, but he wasn't there. "No, Lord!" I thought. I rushed around and poked my head in another shack. What I saw overwhelmed me. He was sitting there with a big smile on his face. His wife said that he had been working in the garden that morning. Repeatedly she said, "God healed him! God healed him!" I'll never forget the feeling I had as I travelled back down that mountain. My heart welled up with joy and thankfulness. "My God is alive! He can do anything and everything! He is my God!" I thanked and praised Him like I never had before. "The lion" that I had faced was dead, and my faith was growing. The devil doesn't want us to trust God, because when we put our trust in God, He does big things, and our faith grows.

I was amazed at his condition. His weight was probably not much more than 70 pounds. His wife told me that he had been in bed for over a year. He couldn't talk, he only whispered with deep agonizing breaths.

When we put our trust in God there is a risk—what if God doesn't work? We could be embarrassed, or worse—"What if I step out in faith and God does nothing?" Remember, it is not faith if we know the outcome. Faith is walking in obedience and believing God's Word when we do not know the outcome. If God wouldn't have helped David, Goliath surely would have killed him. It was Daniel's faith that kept him praying to God, even though he knew a lion's den awaited him. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had so much faith in God that they told the king that even if God chose to not deliver them from the fire, that they still would *...not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up -Dan 3:18*. Then there was Gideon and his three hundred men. The list goes on and on of godly men who put their life on the line, proving that their God was alive.

When we step out in faith, trusting our God, something always happens (sometimes now, sometimes later; sometimes in a way that makes sense, sometimes in a way that seems to make no earthly sense). Yet God does work, and our faith grows. When we truly believe in God, we will trust him. Then, sharing the Gospel message with others is much easier. Just like Joshua did not have a fleet of bulldozers on standby at Jericho, so also we do not need a backup plan when we trust in God.

It is true that the great minds and financial backing of many in America and other modern countries have replaced God. There is a way to do most physical things without God. In fact, most people say that trusting in God is not common sense. If you pray over a sick child, it's not common sense. If you turn down a high paying job because you don't believe that it's God's will, that's not common sense. If you sell your possessions and give to the poor, it's not common sense. These people are right—trusting in God is not common sense. Marching around a wall seven times, believing it will fall down, is not common sense. Going into battle with only 300 men against a great army who were *like grasshoppers for multitude* is not common sense either. Most things done by God-trusting Christians don't make sense, but they do show the world that they really do put their trust in God, and that is what will turn the world upside down again, today.

I remember one day very well. I was away from home when I received a phone call from my wife. She told me to come home quickly—it was an emergency! Our two-year-old son had been stung by bees. I rushed home to see

the neighborhood in chaos. People were running around everywhere. I found my wife and son at the neighbor's house, a local pastor. My son lay in the arms of my wife who told me he had been stung several hundred times. The pastor looked at me quite gravely, telling me that if I didn't get this boy to a hospital right away, he would surely die. I remember thinking one thing—God can heal! I picked up my son and took him across the street to our house, and I prayed. It didn't take long before he began to recover—by the next day he was back out playing.

Many people here in Haiti take their sick to the witch doctor, and he heals them. It's just what happens. How much more can our God do! Please don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying we shouldn't go to the medical doctor or to the hospital; rather, I'm trying to emphasize that our trust should be in God.

Years ago, I decided to take up a part-time job selling knives. I was to take these knives and travel from home to home. I didn't have an interest in knives but was just trying to make some extra money. I was a terrible knife salesman. Everywhere I went everyone said no.

One day the boss took me into his office where he told me that he had noticed I wasn't selling any knives and realized he had forgotten to show me how the knives worked. So, we sat there in his office as he talked about each knife. He had a small pile of kitchen utensils of another brand, which were known for their quality, that he used for a comparison. First, he held up a small piece of leather and asked me to cut it in half with one of the "other" knives. I sawed through the piece of leather with some ease. Then he instructed me to use one of his knives and do the same thing. The new knife sliced through the leather as if it wasn't even there! I was truly amazed. He then picked up a penny and told me to cut it in half using the "other" scissors. I tried but failed; they simply would not cut it. He then told me to do the same using his scissors. It easily cut through the penny, and again I was amazed at the product. He told me that I now knew that these knives were the best and from now on I should be able to sell them. He was right. I began selling knives everywhere I went! I even remember walking into a poorly

kept trailer home without much hope that they would buy. Surprisingly, they bought over \$3,000 worth of knives.

The reason I began to make sales is obvious—I believed in my product. Likewise, if we put our trust in God, we will have confidence. In a day when most proclaiming Christians are ashamed of God and ashamed to stand up for truth, we

can be a bright and shining light. We can be a people who go out into the world and into our communities with a Gospel that we truly believe in! As we do, the world will see it and respond. Many are seeking; they are looking for answers. When someone asks us a question about why we do the things we do or wear what we wear, what is our reply? Do we reply with confidence? Do we have a ready Bible verse? Or do we get embarrassed and desire a hole to climb into? If the world could see that we are confident in our

God, and that we obey him with enthusiasm, it would be a powerful testimony.

I remember traveling through the airport with a small group. As we were standing in line, I overheard a lady ask one of the single sisters in our group why she wore that "thing" on her head. I was excited to listen unnoticed, and I rejoiced as I heard her response. "Have you ever read 1 Corinthians 11? There it instructs us that women should cover their heads. It's a sign of submission." The woman was shocked at her answer, saying she never heard that before, and that her father was a pastor. They continued to have a very interesting conversation that ended with that lady desiring to go home and study her Bible.

A tract can do a lot of good; so likewise, a powerful sermon or a printed article, but someone putting all his trust in God is what this world is looking for! They want to "see something that works," and why not? Our God wants to use us to show Himself strong. Surely each one of us wants to be used by God. We can. Each one of us can. The answer is to *trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding* –Pro 3:5.

Trust in the
Lord
with all thine
heart;
and lean not
unto thine own
understanding.
Proverbs 3:5





The Prevailing Menace of Doubt & Fear

As we, as a church (FCF) and as a ministry (TBV), interact with numerous challenging situations (broken homes, struggling marriages, adopted children, faltering youth, immoral addictions, emotional struggles, and mental health issues) we repeatedly run into questions of doubt. “Why did this happen to me?” “Why doesn’t God change my circumstances?” “How can I trust God when all these painful things have happened to me?” “How can I surrender my life to God when He isn’t trustworthy?”

Most believers claim to trust God and believe His Word. The challenge that seems to come for each of us is two-fold. First, many of us tend to think that believing is primarily “feeling” instead of “choosing.” Secondly, many of us find it easy to believe what God says when it agrees with our experience, our thoughts, and our feelings; the problem arises when what the Scriptures say pushes on my will, my view, my belief, my experience, etc.

On the first point (believing=feeling) we have God’s clear answer from the Apostle Paul, *for we walk by faith, not by sight: -2Co 5:7*. On the second point the reality is that each of these struggles are a clear test of whether we will obey God rather than man (including ourselves), whether we will let God be true and every man a liar (including ourselves), and whether we will allow God to be the authority on all things or if we will still insist on our own will. Many of us claim (give lip service) to trust and believe God in all things, yet when we are faced with our own time of testing, we fail miserably (I know I have).

Additionally, many of us define our *lifestyle of doubts and worry* as being something normal, yet the Bible tells us *to be anxious for nothing and to cast all our cares upon our Lord*. Here the world has slowly deadened our senses to the clear teaching of the Scriptures, in that we have come to accept as normal that which God would have us to rise above. If we step back and consider the definition of “fear” as being on a spectrum, with some fear being quite minor and some being quite severe, we will see that many of our accepted patterns of behavior are outside of God’s perfect will for our lives. Doubt would be on the lesser end of the spectrum, with worry having a slightly stronger presence and effect, while panicking or being frantic would obviously cause much greater interference in our normal lives. Yet the truth is that each one of these is still in the family of “fear,” with the outcome being that we are allowing fear to control us and dictate our thoughts and behaviors. God’s will is that all His children would walk by faith instead of by fear.

God never gives us grace for any of our worries, nor for any future possible “what ifs”. God only gives us grace to go through what He is placing in front of us moment by moment. In the same way that a woman with child must go through the scary possibilities of the pain of childbirth, so likewise, all human beings must go through each circumstance that God

decides is our lot in life. Nothing that we try to think or do (fear, worry, move, change our location, spend money, or ask others to intervene, etc.) will stop or change what God wills for our life. It is our choice to either accept or resist the inevitable in our lives.

The reality is this—each of us will either *yield [our] members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin* by believing the lies of Satan and continuing to allow fear to motivate and direct our thoughts and actions, OR we will *yield [ourselves] unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God* (Rom 6:13), by choosing to believe what God says in His Word and allowing faith to motivate and direct our thoughts and actions.

Here a balancing perspective needs to be brought in. This does not mean that we never wrestle with difficult situations—Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane. It also doesn’t mean that we never appeal to God or our authorities to consider changing our current painful situation—again, Jesus did. Rather, we are to be honest with God (like Jesus was) about the struggle of our heart, but then we need to eventually walk forward in obedience, by faith, with courage (like Jesus did).

Ongoing Support Needed

A big thank you to all who so faithfully continue to support the work of *The Berean Voice*. It is through the many prayers, emails and phone calls of encouragement and suggestions, and the financial contributions of many believers that we can continue to minister to the needs of others. As a non-profit ministry of the church, we do not charge for our material or services, therefore we rely entirely on the ongoing freewill offerings of God’s people. Please prayerfully consider how God would have you to partner with us in this work.

If you believe that God would have you support us financially, monthly support makes our work easier since most of our bills are monthly. However, if this doesn’t work as well for you that is fine. For your convenience there is a remittance envelope in the center of each copy of the magazine or you can go to our website www.bereanvoice.org and use the “donate” feature there for online donations. Below is an estimated breakdown of our needs for your consideration.

Estimated Average Costs Per Quarter (ongoing)

Computers, Printers, Office Equipment	\$450
Resource Shipping Expenses	\$300
Staff Expenses	\$6,500
Magazine Publication	\$9,500
Software/Phone/Internet/Website	\$500
Office Supplies & Expenses	\$200
Books, CDs, & Literature Inventory	\$950
Office Space & Maintenance	\$750



Building Intimacy with God

Stanley R. Martin
North East, PA

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Since the day man was created, God's desire has always been to have a relationship with him. He put the desire for relationship and fellowship within man. When God placed Adam and Eve in the garden, He walked and talked with them in the cool of the day. He had fellowship with them, and they had an intimate relationship with Him.

Webster's defines intimacy as belonging to or characterizing one's deepest nature; marked by very close association, contact, or familiarity; marked by a warm friendship developing through long association (intimate friends).

The relationship that God desires to have with us is more than us simply having a knowledge of Him; it is intimacy that is built, cultivated, and made alive through a two-way interaction. It means having a heart that is one with Him in its desires. Jesus prayed to God, *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us...* —Joh 17:21.

We believe that this oneness existed in the garden, but man sinned. Immediately the relationship was changed from that of oneness and intimacy to that of fear and dread at the thought of God's presence. Disobedience created a rift in the relationship. Because of his sin, man could no longer come directly to God.

But God. It was because of His grace that God sent a Savior to bridge the gap between the sinful human race and a holy God. It is the grace of God that even allows us as humans to grow into intimacy with the Father.

GOD'S PROVISION

God has amply provided for us to enter into a relationship with Him. In John 15, Jesus gives the picture of a vine and branch, saying, *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman* —Joh 15:1. He goes on in verse 4 to say, *abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.* It is as though God is saying to us, "I am near you." He has grafted us into the vine. He is there to nourish us, to feed us, and to sustain us. His life-giving power is flowing to us.

Another picture found in God's Word is that of a temple.

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? —1Co 6:19. Again, God seems to be saying, "I am within you." In the Old Testament, God dwelt in temples made by the work of men. His presence was always there. People could observe His glory and worship Him there. Now He comes and dwells in hearts that are open to Him.

God also conveys a picture to us when He calls us His bride. It's like God is saying, "I am intimate with you." God loves us. He talks with us and He patiently waits for us.

Psalms 23 graphically portrays God's shepherd heart. It's like God says to us, "I am devoted to you." He protects us, leads us, provides for us, cares for us, and lays down His life for us just as a loving shepherd does for his sheep.

God's provisions for us are immeasurable and complete. Why then do we as humans find ourselves distanced from God, in a relationship that lacks intimacy, warmth, and oneness?

HINDRANCES

We want to explore some things that we must lay aside in order to find intimacy with God.

The fast-paced world we live in is not a friend; rather it's a foe in our quest for intimacy. The advertising schemes of retailers have a way of keeping people aloof from reality, constantly moving from one raging fad to the next. This puts a haze in people's minds as to what is true and real, and what is inferior. The world wants us to settle for that which looks good on the surface. It offers instant wealth and happiness, prestige and position. It is full of fun and exciting things to do. It invites us to be our own god, letting us decide what we believe to be right and wrong. It blurs our vision and makes us susceptible to a life filled with regret and remorse. We must lay aside the world with all its allurements and attractions and clearly identify that which will be a hindrance to experiencing an intimate relationship with God.

But is the world our greatest enemy? Probably not. At the root of the world's philosophies is the mastermind, Satan, scheming and devising ways to carry out his evil intentions.

He appears in many different forms, some ever so violent and others subtle and deceiving. He tries to make sin look appealing. His ultimate goal is to get the hearts of men. Once in his grasp, he binds them and lulls them to sleep, making them oblivious to impending doom. We must wield our weapons of warfare and fight against Satan and the works of darkness in order to experience that intimate relationship with God.

Also, we are our own enemy. Nothing hinders our relationship with God more than our selfish hearts and desires. Our sinful hearts must be broken and washed in Jesus' blood. God plants within us a new heart and opens the way for us to have a relationship with Him.

Apathy or indifference in our relationship with God signals a heart that has turned cold toward God and toward spiritual values. It is a heart that obviously will not find intimacy with God. If the desire is not in our hearts, then we certainly will not experience it.

We are destroying relationships instead of building intimacy when we harbor attitudes of bitterness, resentment, or ill-will in our hearts toward others who have wronged us. Our earthly relationships must be free from contention and strife before deep intimacy can be found in our relationship with God. *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also -1Joh 4: 20-21.*

Our priorities will have a great impact on how intimate we become with God. What are the "big issues" in our lives? What are our values? And where does God fit into the picture? These are questions we must face and analyze. Does my desire to build my financial image come before Kingdom goals? We must crucify attitudes of greed and the lust for power in order to find a oneness with our Father.

Each of us has twenty-four hours of time in each day that we will use according to the priorities that we have determined in our hearts, whether consciously or not. How much time do we spend in devotion with God each day? This is so important. Building intimate relationships is a time-consuming endeavor. If the time we set aside for personal worship is hurried and easily shortened or ignored, we will most certainly miss the intimacy God desires to have with us. "But I have too much to do." Take time. "But I'm doing Kingdom work, won't God understand?" Take time. Nothing can take the place of spending time alone with God, feeding on His Word, and letting Him speak to our hearts.

A noted evangelist of the past once wrote, "Spend much time with Jesus, and you will have much assurance. Spend little time with Jesus, and your faith will be shallow, polluted

with many doubts and fears, and lack in the joy of the Lord."

Prayer is a way to express our dependence upon God. The carnal man wants control. He wants to feel like he can manage, and that everything will work out. Understanding our dependence upon God should draw us to our Father's bosom. Don't forget that in relationships, each must be willing to speak and to listen. Be still and allow God to speak to you through His Word and His Spirit.

Too often intimacy with God is never achieved because communication with God is reserved for our morning devotions and at church. God's desire is for us to stay near Him throughout each day. We need to learn the value of brief prayers throughout the day. The six months that an average person spends during their lifetime waiting at traffic lights is an excellent opportunity to communicate with God. The five years spent waiting in various lines can be an excellent time to continue your building venture with God. Stay in a frame of mind where the daily happenings turn you to God. "Thank-you God," "Praise the Lord," and "Help me, Father," should be prayers that ascend often to the throne. Give God every moment. After all, who gave us time?

Jesus said that the first and greatest commandment is, ... *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind -Mat 22:37.* Jesus didn't leave any room for the love of the world in our hearts. He wants all our love or none of it. *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth -Rev 3:15-16.* Our hearts must have an ever-deepening love for God and the things of God. The songwriter put it so beautifully when she wrote, "And the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace!"

Building intimacy with God will be a life-long endeavor. Indeed, our relationship will live on beyond this life into the glorious future, where we will enjoy the purest and fullest degree of love and intimacy with God. Let us be Enochs, who walk with God. Let us be Davids, who pant after the living God, the source of our refreshment. Let us be Elijahs, who listen for God's still small voice. Let us be Daniels, whose prayers ascend morning, noon, and night. Let us follow the example of our Lord Jesus, who spent the night in prayer with His Father. Let us be those who open our hearts when God knocks, so He may enter in and sup with us, and we with Him.

But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works -Psa 73:28.



Morning Meditations from Psalm 40

Annetta Martin
Glenmont, OH

My Help and My Deliverer

Psalm 40:1 I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. 2 He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. 3 And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. 4 Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies. 5 Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. 6 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, 8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. 9 I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. 10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation. 11 Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me. 12 For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me. 13 Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver

me: O LORD, make haste to help me. 14 Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil. 15 Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha. 16 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified. 17 But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

A glorious morning unfolds before me, perfect and peaceful, unmarred by failure. The sky is clear and blue. The horizon is a soft, blushing pink, enhanced by a misty fog. The distant hills and trees are shaded a dusky blue in the misty morning coolness. The morning is ringing with the warbling, twittering, chirping of birds. The grass glows with millions of dew droplets sparkling in the morning light. The pink horizon above the distant, dusky hills gradually fades into a glowing orange sphere that becomes brighter and brighter.

I stand in awe of God. My heart is thrilled at the beauty spread out before me. I am also thrilled at what God has done in my life, and the beauty He has created out of ashes.

I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. God has brought me up out of the pit of despair and discouragement. He has set my feet upon the Rock, Jesus

Christ, and He has established my goings. He knows the plans He has for me. His thoughts and His ways are much higher than mine.

He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. I desire that God will be glorified through the work He has done and is continuing to do in my life. Many, O Lord, are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

I delight to do Thy will, O God: yea, Thy law is within my heart. It is truly my delight to do the will of God; to love Him with my whole heart, soul, strength, and mind; to obey His commandments from my heart.

I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation: I have not concealed Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth from the great congregation. It is such a blessing to have deep and edifying conversations with my brothers and sisters in the Lord, and to share together what the Lord is doing in our lives. It is a great strengthening to my faith.

Withhold not Thy tender mercies from me, O Lord: let Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth continually preserve me. Temptations and hard tests are a very real thing in life; the struggle to keep my heart with a diligence, the battle against stubborn pride, and the urge to utter hasty words of frustration. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me: O Lord, make haste to help me. Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.

The sun has risen above the distant hills and the countryside is now glowing gloriously. The mist has faded into the woods and the distant dusky blue hills and trees have exchanged their robes for vivid shades of green intermixed with hints of red and brown. The sparkling droplets of dew are dazzling in the brilliant sunlight.

Let those that seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee: let such as love Thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified. I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: Thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.



THE INQUISITION of Jacques Dosie

Edward Martin
Glenmont, OH



“My lady, I thank you very much for your affection and favor towards me, but I have given myself entirely to God to be His friend, and with that I hope to live and die,” rang the confident, faith-filled words of Jacques “zhahk” (a French form of the male name Jacob or James).

Persecution was fiercely raging in Europe in the year 1550. For their profession of faith in Jesus Christ, men, women, and even children were snatched from their homes and meeting places and thrown into the dark and cold dungeon cells of area castles. Among these captives, fifteen-year-old Jacques Dosie found himself imprisoned in Leeuwarden, Holland, for the truth of the Gospel. Even though he was only fifteen years old, he was known by his upright testimony and knowledge of the Scriptures, bringing glory to God through the power of the Spirit.

The Lord and Lady Friesland, with many nobles and ladies, were assembled in the royal halls in Leeuwarden. Their conversation turned to the “baptist heretics” that were filling the land.

“Let’s bring in that young lad, Jacques. Surely he has not been too contaminated with this heresy.”

So, he was brought in to be interrogated. Lord Friesland spoke only a few words and seemed in a hurry to finish. He had no time for this talk of religion, especially with guests waiting for a more enjoyable entertainment. Lady Friesland, however, seemed moved with compassion for this youth who was so cruelly bound in the dungeon.

“Why are you in prison? You are only a youth. What brought you here?” she asked.

Jacques answered, “I was captured and thrown into prison only because I believe in Jesus Christ. I abide by Him alone and will not forsake Him.”

The royal lady asked him, “Surely you are not one of those heretics who rebaptized themselves and have perpetrated so much evil in our country? They say they are dispersed on account of their faith and boast of being the church of God. But they are a wicked and rebellious people and cause great commotion in the land.”

“My lady, I do not know any rebellious people nor am I one of their number,” replied Jacques. “But we would much rather, according to the teachings of the Scriptures, assist our enemies. If they hunger and thirst, we bless them with food and drink. We never resist them with revenge or violence as we read in Matthew 5:39.”

“If you were in a position of power it would be seen whether you would assist your enemies,” sneered one of the nobles.

Jacques replied, “Oh, no, my lord, if it were permitted among us to resist the evil with the carnal sword, I would never do so.”

“I know there are sects among you who are very wicked and kill the people. They have their goods and wives in common,” said Lady Friesland.

“Oh, no,” replied Jacques. “We are unjustly charged with these wicked things. We are falsely accused of evil as a means to be persecuted. But as taught in Matthew 5:11, we must suffer and endure all this with patience.”

“Was it not your people who with great dishonor took up arms against the government at Amsterdam and Muenster?” asked Lady Friesland.

“No, my lady, we are not of them,” answered Jacques. “Those people erred greatly. We regard it as a doctrine of the devil to resist the authorities with the sword and violence. We would much rather suffer persecution and death from the authorities.”

“Nevertheless, you are considered to be one of them, because you too make an uproar in the land,” insisted the royal lady. “However, I believe what you say concerning those Muensterites.”

“But, my lady, don’t we read about this in Acts 24:5, how wicked men spoke evil of the apostles themselves as well as the whole band of Christians?” countered Jacques. “Did not wicked men seek to incite the authorities to vengeance against the Christians, though it was all falsehood?”

Lady Friesland didn’t answer but quickly diverted to another topic. “Do you believe that all are damned who are not baptized according to your way?” she asked.

“Oh, no, my lady,” answered Jacques. “Judgement concerning other men belongs to God alone, who shall reward everyone according to his works. This is clearly stated in many places of the Holy Scriptures. Moreover, the water does not have the power to cleanse us from sin, as 1 Peter 3:21 says, but is merely a sign of all obedience.”

“Can you still sin after you are baptized?” asked Lady Friesland.

“Yes, my lady, for this is clearly evident from the words of Paul in Romans 7:18,” replied Jacques. “We are still clothed in a weak and sinful body, and sin in many things. But we must constantly crucify and mortify the flesh, and not practice or fulfill the works of the flesh. If we fail to do this, the righteousness of God will condemn us to eternal death.”

Lady Friesland was becoming agitated. “Why don’t you listen to the church inquisitor?” she demanded.

Jacques replied, “My lady, because I will not accept his doctrine, unless he first can clearly prove to me that it agrees in all points with the Word of God. Otherwise he is laboring in vain. My faith is founded on the pure Word of God alone. As for the practice of infant baptism, I contradict his argument with reason since it is not a command of God Almighty but much rather the invention of men. Infants do not have the least bit of knowledge or discernment about what is required for baptism. But Christ in His love for such innocent ones has promised them the kingdom of God through grace, without requiring baptism.

“And further, my lady, I find that the Roman church is infected with many other errors besides this. They seek to

make Christ come into the bread, or that the bread and wine should become changed into His flesh and blood. I do not believe this but regard it as an exceedingly gross error and absurdity. But I believe that Christ truly ascended to heaven and sits on the right hand of His Father as we find in Mark 16:19. There is no salvation in their flour, mass, purgatory, or any of their services for the dead. All of their human inventions, and there are many, are nowhere recognized in the Holy Scriptures. But on the contrary, we call upon God and seek our salvation in Him. Our salvation is not in any creation of man, that we may not corrupt God’s own glory and give it to any of His creatures.”

At this point the mayor, who was also present, interrupted, “So don’t you believe in the sacrament which Christ Himself instituted?”

“Sir, Paul says that the bread is broken in remembrance of Him, and that the cup of blessing is the communion of the blood of Christ,” replied Jacques.

The mayor had nothing to answer to this.

“I consider this the worst thing about you, that you will not have the children baptized,” stated Lady Friesland. “All Germany and every kingdom regard your doings as heresy.”

“It is indeed true we are despised everywhere even as the apostles were,” replied Jacques. “But we do not believe that unbaptized children shall perish at the judgment day.”

“My dear child,” said the lady pleadingly. “Come over to our side, and repent, and you shall get out of this trouble. I promise to secure your release.”

“My lady, I thank you very much for your affection and favor towards me,” answered Jacques boldly. “But I will not change my faith to please mortal man unless it be proven to me with the Scriptures. I have given myself entirely to God, to be His friend, and with that I hope to live and die.”

“My son, I have compassion for you,” she pleaded again. “Repent of your baptism and do not be so stubborn. It would be a heavy cross for my heart if you should die for this cause, being such a young child. If you repent, I will see that you are released and may go home.”

“I cannot see that there is any crime at all in my baptism. I have not followed my own cause but the Holy institution of our Lord Jesus Christ. I have not been able to find another better way to the kingdom of God except through baptism,” replied Jacques. “I am inclined to seek the Lord my God with my whole heart.”

“Look at all these men around you. Do you dare be so presumptuous to say all of them are in error?” asked Lady Friesland.

“My lady,” replied Jacques. “In Israel, four hundred

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Joey's Downfall

Rosa Tindall
Millersburg, OH

Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord –Col 3:20.

Years ago, there was a boy named Joey who lived with his father and mother on the outskirts of a city. One day Joey's father gave him a brand new red and white bike, which he had been wanting for a long time.

There was a big hill close to their house where the big boys in the neighborhood enjoyed riding their bikes. Joey's father strictly forbade him from riding with the big boys on the hill, since it was too dangerous. Instead, he was only allowed to ride down the nice smooth sidewalk, past numerous houses, through a little alley, and then finally back to his house once again.

As the days and weeks went by, this began to lose its excitement. He watched enviously as the big boys walked their bikes up the hill almost directly in front of his house. At the top they would jump on their bikes, and with gleeful shouts, race down the hardtop road, swiftly turning onto the adjoining street at the bottom of the hill.

"Whee, here we come!" they would shout as they rushed by, leaving Joey to pedal calmly on around his little block again and again.

"Come on Joey!" the boys hollered. "Why

don't you come up with us? See what fun we are having! You are too scared," they teased.

Joey was too embarrassed to tell them that his father had forbidden him since he was too little and might fall off his bike and hurt himself. The boys would have only made more fun of him, so he remained silent. How he wished he could go up and show his friends that he was not afraid. Joey thought, "Maybe if I would go down the hill just once, my dad would realize that I'm not so little after all. Then Dad would be proud of me and let me go down the hill with the big boys anytime I want to. Oh, how exciting that would be." The very thought made his heart beat quickly in anticipation.

Joey did not need to wait very long for his opportunity. His father was going to be gone for a couple of days on business. Joey thought this would be his chance to prove to his dad that he was able to ride his bike with the big boys. With excitement and anticipation, he took his bike up the hill. He felt so grown-up in the big boys' company. Surely his father was wrong! Now he would prove to everybody that he knew better than anyone else what he was able to do and not do.

With a run and a hop, he was on his bike. As the bike went faster and faster, he grabbed the handlebars more firmly. At that moment, one of the mischievous boys, coming up the hill, tossed a stone at Joey's tire as he flew by. Joey swerved sharply to avoid the stone. Before he knew what was happening, he was sailing thru the air without his bike. He rolled and skidded and bumped, before coming to a painful stop. Joey was one big mess. His pants and shirt were torn. He had cuts and bruises on his hands, knees, and face. No more was he thinking of being a hero of the great biking hill. Our little, humbled "hero" of the hill was taken home to his mother, who sympathetically and lovingly washed and patched his wounds.

The next day Joey's father returned home. When he saw the bandages on his son and the damaged bicycle, he guessed the story immediately. Joey's bike was put away in storage for several weeks as punishment for his disobedience.

Joey sat on the curb as the boys raced down the hill, then on to the other street. Now Joey had no desire to sneak off and ride his bike with the big boys. He had learned his lesson—to always obey his father, even when he thought he knew better. He realized that his father was not trying to ruin his fun but instead he was trying to keep him safe.

When Joey was again allowed to ride his bike, he was quite content to ride peacefully around his little block of houses. From now on he was going to obey his father, not only in matters of safety, but in all things.



...continued from page 17

prophets were against the prophet Micaiah, who alone spoke the truth. For speaking the truth, he was imprisoned on bread and water. Later in his distress, King Ahab realized prophet Micaiah spoke the truth, but it was too late. We read of this in 2 Chronicles 18.”

The lady finally said, “I find many good things in you; but your greatest error lies in your baptism. To me that does not seem to be of God.”

Lady Friesland had Jacques brought before her many times. Even though he was young in years, he was mature in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. He had built his foundation upon the Rock, Jesus Christ. With the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, he valiantly repelled all the subtle devices of Satan, whether consisting in many severe threats, or in fair promises of the kingdom of this world. Nothing could move him to forsake Christ.

Jacques was condemned to death by the rulers of the darkness of this world. Consequently, he testified and confirmed the true faith with his death and blood and, through grace, obtained the crown of everlasting glory.

Now let us fast forward from this scene to 469 years later. Times have changed. Men, women, and children are no longer thrown into cold dungeons for their faith, at least not here in North America. But the enemy of our soul is the same. He may not go around as a roaring lion, but he surely comes around as an angel of light.

Dear youth, you may not realize it, but today you are on trial. Your faith and convictions are being challenged. Satan, in the form of the Lady Frieslands of today, is questioning you. In her audience are the worldly-wise men, the progressive Protestants, and even some contemporary folks bearing the Anabaptist name.

“Why are you looking so pious?” asks Lady Friesland. “In this day and age, you need to loosen up. How do you expect to win the world when you appear so somber?”

You are the Jacques of today, so what is your answer?

Lady Friesland continues, “You claim to be part of a separated people. Yet I see you immersing yourselves into sports, hunting, and fishing. I see you following fashions. How are you different from other Christians? Or even from the world for that matter?”

Jacques, do you have any convictions of your own? Do your choices make a difference in eternity for yourself or others? Are your lifestyle decisions a life-or-death matter to you?

Seductively, Lady Friesland leans in closer and whispers, “What does it matter? Your parents are old-fashioned. Everyone does it today. Just doing it once is harmless. Why are you such a prude?”

Jacques, is the Bible in your heart like it was with Jacques of old? Do you know and love the Word? Can you withstand temptation?

Now Lady Friesland comes from a different angle. “Why do you wear that small covering on your head? What does it mean to today’s culture? Nothing. Enlightened Christians are getting rid of it everywhere. And young Jacques, don’t you think that girl at your side who you are courting would look prettier with that covering gone? It’s just a symbol anyway.”

Jacques and Jacqueline, will you stand true to God? Do you have a ready answer?

It is time to take a serious reflection of your faith and convictions. Jacques, in his youth, was standing to become the church of tomorrow in his day. Today you are Jacques. Tomorrow the church will consist of you and all the Jacqueses and Jacquelines who are around you today. Is this a church you want to be a part of? Are you satisfied with what you see? Are you satisfied with your own lifestyle convictions and faith? Will they carry you through when the raging battles of life hit?

So, dear youth of today, will you take some time to honestly consider your personal life in the mirror of God’s Word? If God’s Spirit gives you an answer of peace and rest, praise the Lord. If in any way your heart is troubled, or convicted, don’t become discouraged. Remember it is ...*the goodness of God [that] leadeth thee to repentance* –Rom 2:4.



Preparing for Death Gracefully

Studies in 2 Timothy 4:6-18

-by Harold S. Martin

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Second Timothy is the last letter that Paul wrote. He was in a damp underground prison, dug out under a government building in the city of Rome. Paul was jailed for preaching Christ and the resurrection. Nero was the Roman Emperor; he was the Saddam Hussein of New Testament times. Nero was a vicious ruler who would go to any extreme to eliminate his enemies.

Paul knew that unless God would intervene in some unusual way, his death was just around the corner. He fully expected the Roman soldiers to come at any time and lead him off to the place of execution. However, because Paul's hope was centered in Jesus Christ, he was not floundering in despair. He writes about the last months of his life in 2 Timothy 4.

1. Remember the Christian's Hope in Death (4:6-8)

In this section of 2 Timothy 4, we are given a great testimony concerning a Christian's victory in the face of impending death. As Paul reflected over his past life and peered on into the future, there were three observations:

a. His present condition (verse 6)

"For I am now ready to be offered [already being poured out as a drink offering], and the time of my departure is at hand."

Paul was so sure that death was coming very soon that he could say, "The time of my departure is at hand." The Greek word translated "departure" means "a loosening of anchor" or "a cutting of the ropes." The word is from the language of mariners. When a ship loosens anchor or unties the ropes in one port, automatically it implies setting sail for another port.

Paul realized that death was near. He says, "I am about to loosen anchor here in this life and set sail for the shores of eternity." It's not that the end is coming! It's just that his departure is coming. It was simply that he was setting sail from one place so that he could enter the port at another place. Paul was ready to go. He had no regrets. He slipped away graciously. Physical death was not the end as far as Paul was concerned.



Many people look at death as a dark hole into which people stumble when they breathe their last mortal breath. But it is not so for the Christian.

Death is a moment of victory! In 2 Corinthians 5:8 the Apostle Paul says that God's people will be pleased "to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." The "earthly house" (2 Corinthians 5:1) in which we live (the body) becomes fragile and weak; it breaks down eventually; it is laid away into the earth. But for the believer in Christ there is provided a better house—one that is eternal and will last forever.

b. His past experience (verse 7)

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

The Christian life is a battleground. It is a war against unbelief, false teachers, half-hearted Christianity, and dealing with the desires of the flesh. The hymnwriter says, "My soul be on thy guard, Ten thousand foes arise; The hosts of sin are pressing hard to draw thee from the skies." Paul had stood before Felix and Agrippa, and in the presence of other officials of Rome—and had not given even an inch. He stood firmly for Christ crucified, buried, and risen again from the dead. And so, now, when his life is fading away, he can say, "I have fought a good fight." Paul's dedication to fighting evil and standing against unrighteousness should be a challenge to us—to fight the battles of life courageously.

Paul not only fought a good fight; he also says, "I have finished my course." The race of life was just about over for the aged Apostle. Many years before, when he was just a young man, Paul had used the same phrase. He said, "I'm not moved by the difficulties of life, but I hope to finish (the) race with joy. Then (Acts 20:24) he was a young man—and much of Paul's race still lay before him. Now (in 2 Timothy 4) he is standing at the finish line—looking back over the route. It is easy to begin the Christian race, but what really counts is to persevere to the end!

It is important to note that Paul did not boast about having won the race; he simply said, "I have finished the race." For Paul, the race of life is about over! Paul's final statement (verse 7) as he contemplates death is this: "I have kept the faith." Paul had carefully guarded the body of doctrines which lie at the heart of the Christian faith.

It would have been easy to compromise—just a little bit at a time—but Paul did not do that. Paul kept the faith. He proclaimed truth in its purity, and he sought to live by it.



c. His future crown (verse 8)

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Serving Christ has rewards, not just here in this life, but also in eternity. In ancient athletic contests, the victor was crowned with a wreath of leaves. The wreath soon withered and dried, but for the Christian, there'll be a crown that never shrivels up. We don't know exactly what the crown will be like, but we know that when we see Jesus—all the sacrifices and all the labor here will be rewarded. And the words "and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" assure us that the same reward Paul anticipated awaits all who run the Christian race successfully.

It is sad that many do not have hope in death. One movie star, when asked about her thoughts as she was getting older, said, "I confess that I think about death every day. It must be our punishment, and we deserve it—but it's the decomposition that gets me." She said, "You spend your whole life looking after your body, and then in the end you rot away like that."

What the movie star was forgetting is that human beings are more than "a body." Barring the return of Christ, the death-angel will be calling all of us sooner than we think. When that moment comes, God's people can look back over life without regrets. They will appeal to the atonement purchased by Jesus. When sinners stand before God to give an account for their life—and He unfolds the record of their sinful past—they will be speechless before Him. When the moment of death comes, we should have nothing to do but simply to die.

2. Learn Lessons from the Friends of Paul (4:9-18)

The Apostle Paul understood the great importance of friends. The Epistle closes with some rich lessons as Paul addresses some of his friends.

“Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me” (verse 9).

Timothy was a special friend. Paul had visited Timothy’s home town of Lystra already on his first missionary journey. The converts at Lystra included Timothy and his mother and his grandmother. Now, a number of years have come and gone, and Paul was in a damp underground prison in Rome, bereft of many of his friends. He was cut off from the churches he had helped to establish. He missed the fellowship of his former traveling companions. And so, Paul urges Timothy to come and be with him in prison. In verse 21, he urges Timothy to come before winter sets in.

Verse 9 shows how important it is to have Christian fellowship. None of us is so super-spiritual that he or she can get along without Christian friends. When we see the zeal of our fellow Christians, and share in their trials, and rejoice in their joys, it gives us new courage to serve the Lord. It is almost impossible to be a “lone-ranger Christian.”

“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia” (verse 10).

Most of Paul’s former co-workers had left and gone elsewhere. Some followed after the enticements of the world; others were serving God in new places of ministry.

Demas was a man whose name has gone down in shame. Demas had labored with Paul for a while (Colossians 4:14), but now worldly allurements and a love of ease had caused him to forsake Paul. We can almost sense the sadness in the Apostle’s heart as he wrote these words about Demas—Demas has forsaken me! In Philemon 24, Demas was a “fellow laborer”—a co-worker with Paul. In Colossians 4:14 it is just “Demas,” but still with Paul. In 2 Timothy 4 it is “Demas hath forsaken me”—gone from Paul’s presence. It seems like there was a step-by-step history of spiritual degeneration. Somewhere along the pathway of life, Demas made a change. Perhaps it was a desire to get things (materialism); or a longing to indulge in worldly thrills (pleasures); or a desire to be like most other people (popularity). Satan usually doesn’t ask us to become shamefully wicked all at once; Satan lures his victims one step at a time, and then finally leads them farther away from God.

Crescens is a name that does not appear at any other place in the Bible. Crescens is one of the many persons in the Scriptures who is practically unknown. It is likely that he did not have many outstanding gifts. He was an ordinary person—yet he played a major part in the cause of Christ. The major part of God’s work is carried on by common, ordinary, almost unknown people. The Bible says that “not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not

many noble, are called” (1 Corinthians 1:26). God uses men like the Apostle Paul, Martin Luther, Menno Simons, and Alexander Mack—but He uses more persons like Peter’s brother Andrew—quiet persons, people who hardly ever speak publicly, yet are faithful disciples of Jesus.

Think for a bit about some persons who are nameless in the Scriptures. There were the shepherds who watched their flocks; the Good Samaritan in the parable Jesus told; the maid who informed her mistress about Elisha; the lad who brought the five loaves and two fish to Jesus; the town clerk who quieted the angry mob and saved Paul’s life; and the youth who told the centurion about a plot against the life of Paul. Many people in the church today may not be nameless, but they feel they are insignificant in the work of the Lord. However, they can phone their friends and invite them to a special service. They can send letters to those who are in the midst of deep trials. Such persons are of great value in the kingdom of God.

The name Titus refers to a co-worker who was a man of decision and backbone. Titus was an energetic and vigorous man; when Paul had a tough assignment, he chose Titus to deal with it. Paul sent Titus to Corinth; a church divided by a spirit of faction (2 Corinthians 8). He sent Titus to the church at Crete, an island nation inhabited by a crude and barbarous people (Titus 1). And Titus was sent to Dalmatia (Yugoslavia), a mountainous country east of the Adriatic Sea (2 Timothy 4). Titus had a strong mind and a tough fiber; this enabled him to face difficult situations.

“Only Luke is with me. Take Mark and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry. And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus” (verses 11-12).

Luke is one of the lovely characters of the New Testament. During Paul’s final imprisonment in Rome, Luke the doctor scarcely ever left his side. Luke was not a “fair-weather friend.” Luke stood by the aged Apostle even in the hour of testing. Paul’s loneliness was relieved by the presence of one of his most faithful friends.

Mark was a young man who had joined Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 12:25; 13:5), but Mark turned back and left the older Paul and Barnabas to scale the rugged mountain passes alone (Acts 13:13). Then later, Barnabas wanted to take Mark along on a second missionary journey—but Paul objected, because he wanted a co-worker who was not a quitter. But now Mark had made a change for the better. Paul was convinced of Mark’s sincerity, and he requested that Mark come and minister with him from the prison. Sometimes when a young man is rebuked for his failure, he shows a spirit of resentment—but Mark resolved to make a man out of himself yet! He re-established

himself in the good graces of Paul, and God chose him to write the second book of the New Testament. If we blunder somewhere along the pathway of life, we need to confess our sins, learn the lessons that our failures can teach us, and then start over again.

Tychicus was a person with good qualities. In Colossians 4:7, Tychicus is called “a beloved brother” and “a faithful minister.” As a beloved brother he was a considerate, warm, and friendly man. As a faithful minister he was not easily swayed by every wind of doctrine that he encountered. Those two characteristics are a remarkable combination of qualities. Some are faithful but not very kind. Others are kind but are not doctrinally strong and faithful. Tychicus had both qualities. He was clear and faithful in doctrinal matters; he was also charitable in his attitude toward others.

Paul says in essence, “Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments” (verse 13 NKJV).

Roman prisons were not heated in winter. They were dungeons dug out under government buildings. Paul knew he would be cold, and so he urged Timothy to bring the coat. It is not unspiritual to give proper attention to our own physical needs. Paul’s request for “parchments” (copies of the Scriptures) and other “books,” indicates that he read more than the Scriptures themselves. Those who scorn the reading of good books are not following the example of the New Testament Apostles.

Again, Paul says in essence, “Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words” (verses 14-15 NKJV).

Alexander was a metalworker who probably made images to the goddess Diana—and because the Gospel interfered with his idol-making business, he had caused Paul some extreme trouble in the past. We don’t know precisely what the “much harm” was which he had done to Paul, but the Greek word translated “did” carries with it the concept of “informing.” Alexander was likely the informant responsible for Paul’s second arrest. He may have attempted to expose Paul in an unfavorable light before the Roman authorities. The sentence at the end of verse 14 is not an evil wish on the part of the Apostle; Paul is letting judgment in the hands of God—to Whom judgment belongs.

“At my first answer no man stood with me, but all forsook me [but] the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the

Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion” (verses 16-17).

The word “answer” refers to the early stage of Paul’s trial. It was Paul’s speech of self-defense. No one spoke in Paul’s behalf. It was dangerous to do so. Christianity was an illegal religion; it would have involved risking one’s life to come to his aid. Yet Paul knew that he was not alone. The Lord empowered him to present his own case before the judge. The Lord gave him the words.

The “mouth of the lion” (verse 17) symbolizes extreme danger, but it is especially used as a reference to Nero (the Roman Emperor). Greek writers spoke of Nero as “the lion” because of his cruel nature, and Paul was thankful that he was delivered from Nero.

The first part of the trial seemed to go well, yet by unanimous tradition, Nero soon condemned Paul and put him to death. Can you picture Paul before Nero? Nero lived in a palace containing a statue of himself that stood 120 feet tall. He fished with hooks of gold; his horses were shod with silver; he never wore the same garment twice. Nero divorced his first wife; twelve days later he married again; within 24 hours he kicked his second wife to death. Nero covered some of the early Christians with pitch and turned them into torches to light the streets of the city at night.

I’d like to know what Paul said in his answer (his defense) to that beastly man. Anyhow, what he said was straight enough to get him beheaded shortly thereafter. Historians say that Paul and Nero likely died within six weeks of each other. The one died like a fool; the other died like a saint. Do you think they both went to the same place? If there is no Hell, then our God is not a just God.

“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom. To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen!” (verse 18).

Paul trusted God and believed that he would be brought safely into the eternal kingdom. And as we look forward to days ahead, may the same hope that Paul possessed be an incentive for us to persevere until the Lord returns or until the death angel calls us into the presence of the Lord at the end of life’s journey.

Paul closes the letter of Second Timothy with greetings for Priscilla and Aquila and Onesiphorus. He mentions Erastus and Trophimus. He also names Eubulus and Pudens and Linus and Claudia—and then prays that God’s grace and kindness will be with Timothy.





“Regeneration”

—Stem Cell Issues

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Today, I'd like to continue and possibly complete our discussion of Regenerative Medicine. I want to consider where it stands today, and how Christians can navigate the complex maze of treatments. As you may recall, in the previous issue of this magazine we discussed that Regenerative Medicine is man's attempt to re-create organ systems. We described how fetal tissue was attempted to be used, due to its low rate of rejection by the people receiving it. Medically speaking, it was problematic in that, if used on a large scale, it would require large amounts of aborted fetuses. Later, embryonic stem cells were studied in depth. Here, embryos, which are newly conceived humans in their earliest stages, are dissected (cut apart) and stem cells are taken.

Think of stem cells as indolent, immature adults, who live in their parents' basements, without direction, not knowing what they want to do with their lives. With a little encouragement and direction, they can finally find their way, finding a specialized skill and important role in life. In like manner, scientists have discovered ways to “program” these stem cells, “encouraging” them to become specialized into types of cells, such as nerve, heart, blood, and insulin producing. These cells would then be grown in a lab, then used to repair or replace the diseased or injured tissue.

However, “taking” stem cells from embryos results in his or her (the embryo's) destruction. This is obviously problematic for Christians, knowing that one of the seven things that the Lord says is an abomination is ...*hands that shed innocent blood* –Pro 6:17. Additionally, the sixth commandment directs, *Thou shalt not kill* –Exo 20:13. Because these objections were recognized by the scientific community, there was pressure to find an alternative.

The Apostle Paul states, *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who*

will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it –1Co 10:13. His words are as true today as they were 2000 years ago. While Christians suffer from disease just as commonly as non-Christians do, modern medicine can present the “temptation” of a treatment and relief from disease or injury that is actually immoral. But God is faithful, and his escape is twofold. First and foremost, He gave His son to bear our burdens. It is to this Great Physician that we should always turn to first.

In the case of stem cell treatments, it so happens that it was discovered that these immature stem cells are not only found in human embryos, but they are also found in all people, from infants to grown-ups as well. This may be the physical “escape” for His faithful children. These immature stem cells (usually obtained from a patient's fat tissue or bone marrow) can be grown, cultured, and used just as well as embryonic stem cells. It turns out that “Adult Stem Cells” have actually been more clinically effective, since they are “custom designed” for each individual, and since they come from that person's own body; therefore, there is very little problem with rejection.

Umbilical cord stem cells have also been shown to be useful, particularly in bone and cartilage treatments. Just as there have been obstacles to overcome when using embryonic stem cells, so too there are problems with developing treatments using adult or umbilical cord stem cells. Think again of a stem cell as an immature, indolent adult. Just having him “hang out” with a master carpenter will not make him a master carpenter if all he does is find entertainment on his cell phone. Stem cells, like an apprentice, need intense, focused training and direction to become specialists in their chosen field of expertise. Learning how to turn these “switches” on is perhaps one

of the greatest challenges. The main idea here is that just injecting stem cells that have not been “programmed” or “trained” into damaged or diseased tissue will not automatically make them “know” what to become or how to function.

Similarly, just putting a young electronics apprentice on a bus that is traveling into a city that just had a power grid failure will not result in restoring the power. Here the parallel is placing stem cells into the brain of a stroke victim or a paraplegic accident victim, hoping that the stem cells will “know” what to do, and which specific connections to repair in order to restore function. This may not work as hoped. It would be fruitless to expect success unless and until these problems are also addressed.

Then there is the lingering problem of these eager youngsters (stem cells) knowing when to stop. The problem with fetal tissue turning into cancerous tumors is also a problem to be dealt with in stem cells. Considering this, there is one exception: umbilical cord stem cells are generally not known to turn malignant.¹

Here is a short list of treatments that are in development that would use stem cells:

- Macular Degeneration—Repair a damaged retina.
- Spinal Cord Injury/Stroke—Repair nerve tissue.
- Burns—Repair skin tissue.
- Congestive Heart Failure—Repair damaged heart tissue.
- Diabetes—Replace or increase the pancreatic tissue that makes insulin.
- Arthritis—Repair damaged cartilage.
- Autoimmune diseases (Lupus, Multiple Sclerosis) — Destroy the immune system that is attacking its own body and replace or “reset” it with a new immune system derived from one’s own stem cells.
- Leukemias—Destroy the cancerous blood cells and replace them with new stem cell derived blood cells.
- New organs—Replace diseased, damaged, or cancer-ridden organs, such as the kidney, liver, or pancreas, with organs derived from the patient’s own stem cells, grown in a lab, and transplanted surgically, without the need of anti-rejection drugs.

As you can see, there is a very long list of diseases and ailments that may result in effective treatments with stem

cells. I am very optimistic that within a decade, remedies for many of these ailments will be commonly available. However, learning how to make stem cells that are expertly specialized into specific tissue types, learning how to turn stems cells on and then turning them off at the necessary time (once the job is finished), and learning how to “teach” the stem cells where and how to make repairs will take time.

I am not the only one who is excited about the possibilities. That is why hundreds of stem cell clinics have sprung up across the country, trying to get in on the excitement. But do the claims of any of these clinics align with reality? Which ones are legitimate? I know that there are many clinics offering stem cell treatments for various ailments, so let’s now look at some of the treatments that are available today—ones that have evidence of actually helping, as well as realistic expectations. Let’s also look at some of the possible complications, to help us make informed decisions.

First, the risks and complications

- Introduction of infection—For example, bacteria living on the skin can enter a joint space from a simple injection, resulting in destruction of the joint, even under the cleanest of conditions.
- Stems cells moving from their introduction site and not going where they are intended or not staying contained to the specific area of treatment—One study involving pigs treated with stem cells injected into areas of a damaged heart after a heart attack showed near complete return of function, but then the new heart tissue kept growing, eventually filling the heart’s pumping chamber, which caused all the pigs to die.
- Stem cells changing into unexpected or inappropriate cell types—Stem cells used for a facial cosmetic effect have actually turned to bone.²
- Growth of tumors—There are documented cases of different tumors, including brain and kidney tumors that have developed after patients were treated for stroke and kidney failure using stem cells.
- Failure to work as expected—There are documented cases of people with macular degeneration, who were treated with stem cells injected into the eye, that have resulted in blindness.
- Stem cells can’t be withdrawn—Unlike medicines such as a pill or an injection, if something goes wrong,

1 Chen G., Yue A., Ruan Z. Human umbilical cord-derived mesenchymal stem cells do not undergo malignant transformation during long-term culturing in serum-free medium. PLoS One. 2014;9:1–9.

2 <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/stem-cell-cosmetics/?redirect=1>

one can't just withhold the next dose. Once stem cells are introduced, they can't be taken back. The course that has been set will continue.

The rates of complications are hard to know, since there are no reporting requirements when performed outside of formal clinical investigations.

Next, the known benefits

The FDA (the governmental Food and Drug Administration that is tasked with health safety) has approved stem cell treatments for dozens of blood cancers (leukemias) and blood diseases using umbilical cord stem cells. Though not FDA approved, studies have shown some benefit for using stem cells for orthopedic applications, particularly arthritis of the knees. (Using stem cells for such orthopedic uses, without the need to stimulate them to become cartilage cells beforehand, appears to be the exception to the rule. Remember most stem cells need to be specialized before being used.) That's it! Aside from this, most other uses for stem cells should only be considered either **highly experimental** or **highly suspect of exaggerated benefits**. Could there be other beneficial treatments that are not FDA approved? Perhaps, but it's important to realize that the claims have often far outpaced the science.

So how is one to know? Here are some things to consider when choosing providers of stem cell treatments, as well as red flags, to tell you if there are better places to go for your health care. (These points are also true for just about any other treatment):

1. Informed consent—Every medical treatment has risks and benefits. These should be routinely discussed with you beforehand, without you needing to ask. Any practitioner who claims there are no risks, only benefits, either **is not sufficiently knowledgeable** or **is not sufficiently honest!**
2. Can they handle the complications? —Joint injections can sometimes result in infection. These can be severe infections that can potentially destroy the joint. Such complications are not just simply treated with antibiotics, but with surgery. These stem cell treatments are better handled by an orthopedic surgeon or practitioner that has a close relationship with one, if complications should arise. Likewise, treatments involving nerves should be done by neurologists or neurosurgeons.

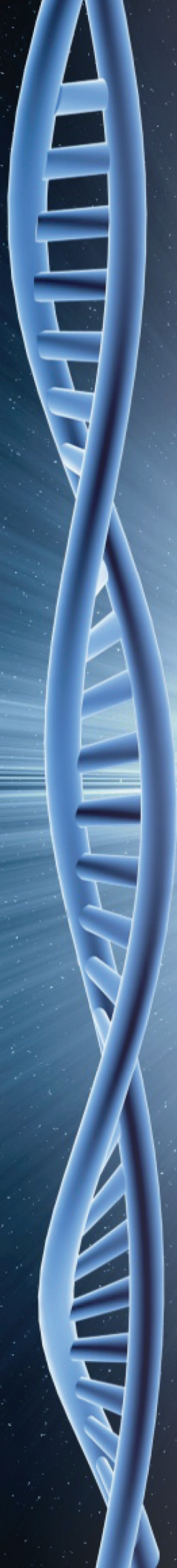
3. Is the clinic adequately equipped? —Stem cells need to be handled appropriately. The transport of umbilical stem cells and improper thawing from the supplier can drastically reduce numbers, which may have a great deal to do with determining the success of the procedure. Additionally, these cells may be in a state of “shock,” unless they are appropriately re-cultured after being thawed. This allows them to re-enter a desirable growth phase again.³ This may mean having a specialized lab and microbiologist on staff to properly grow and care for the stem cells, ensuring good quality control. This usually requires a university setting, not just a small clinic or office that has a nurse to thaw the stem cells after receiving them from an overnight delivery service. Glitzy web sites, colorful brochures, and informational dinners are not enough.

4. Guinea pigs and rats are “experimented on,” people go through “clinical trials.” —Please avoid any practitioner who says they are doing experiments. Clinical trials involving people, which have the oversight of ethics boards, only occur after experiments on animals have shown low risk of harm, and a good chance of success. If a treatment is very effective, the FDA has suggested that as few as 42 participants can demonstrate adequate safety to grant approval. This is not an outrageously high threshold to overcome. Additionally, patients involved in clinical trials are usually only expected to cover minimal costs, if any. Practitioners who “experiment” on people rarely do it for free.⁴

5. Realistic claims. —Does your practitioner claim 100 percent success? If so, it is better to **run away** (if your knees will allow you to) than to simply **walk away!** Knee treatments, for example, may only delay knee replacements for many people. Some may avoid surgery, but certainly not all. Do not expect a cure. Also, do they make claims well outside of what is commonly recognized? “Cures” claimed for Alzheimers, Parkinson's, or other ailments that are not FDA approved? I cannot totally exclude the possibility that such treatments may exist at some future time. However, these practitioners should be able to point to (and provide to you) published studies. If there is a miraculous cure, the world should be able to benefit from it, and he or she should be able to patent it, so as to reap the financial benefits of

3 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3279133/>

4 <http://iaclid.ir/DL/elm/95/clarifying%20stem%20cell%20therapy%60s%20benefits%20and%20risks.pdf>



sharing their techniques and discoveries with the rest of the world. By doing so, it is independently tested and verified. Anyone who has a “secret” cure, that they alone possess, should be avoided.

6. Does it make sense? —By simply injecting stem cells (that have not been induced by a lab into their specialty state such as nerve cells, heart cells, etc.) into the bloodstream to treat things like nerve disorders, for example, does not make sense. Clinical trials of legitimate treatments first specialize the stem cells, then directly apply them to the affected area. For example, specific types of nerve cells are injected directly into specific locations of the brain, and heart cells are injected directly into the scarred tissue of the heart. Remember the indolent adult (the unspecialized stem cell)? You can’t expect to put them on a bus (inject them into a vein), send them into the big city (the body), without instructions on what to do (leaving them unspecialized), not knowing where to go (to somehow find the diseased part of the body) and then magically expect success.
7. The hard sell. —Are you being told that or are you made to feel that you are “missing out” if you decline? Do the clinic advertisements have testimonial bylines, something to the effect of “Individual results may vary, and testimonials are not claimed to represent typical results and are not intended to represent or guarantee that anyone will achieve the same or similar results...”? As the old adage goes, if it’s too good to be true (especially if they actually tell you so), then it probably is. In these cases, consider the claims to be most likely somewhat exaggerated, and also consider working with someone who can give a more honest set of expectations.

I pray that God may grant you wisdom: *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him* —Jas 1:5.

Special Note:

I have had some interest expressed from parents who are considering taking their children to Japan to be vaccinated there, if we are unable to have the vaccines shipped to the United States. If there are any readers of this magazine who are likewise interested, please contact The Berean Voice, so that we can plan and coordinate accordingly. You can find contact information inside the front cover of any copy of The Heartbeat of the Remnant magazine.



God in the Cloud

Lee Rufener
Athens, WI

Behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud –Exo 16:10.

What a strange phenomenon is this concentrated mass of vapor that navigates the sky above us. In one instance, a cloud can minister such immense blessedness and hope, while in another it can be the instigator of nagging uncertainty and even the arousal of ragged fear. Clouds were often, no doubt, the welcome shade to the heads of weary fishermen upon Galilee and the propagator of hope to the toiling farmer. How often these clouds part at midday to allow the sun's beaming rays access to the earth. Then in the evening, they provide the opaque structure for the exquisite beauty of a silver lineation.

We may marvel to see an airplane weighing over 700,000 pounds mount up with wings and soar through the heavens, yet a cloud can carry millions of tons of water without any of the dynamics of human intervention. Clouds are formed when moist, warm air rises to a cooler elevation and water condenses onto microscopic "seeds" such as dust, ash, or bacteria. If there's more water vapor than places on which it can condense, then ice crystals can also serve as seeds and take on moisture—*He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them –Job 26:8.* Eventually, these seeds become too heavy for updrafts to support, and then, behold, it is time for the umbrella.

To the parched land in Elijah's day, the smallest of clouds (like a man's hand in 1 Kings 18:44) was the answer from the Almighty that He was again prepared to bless His people

with rain. Yet, to others like Job and Jeremiah, the cloud represented the ultimate emblem of doubt, despair, and discouragement. *Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passeth away as a cloud –Job 30:15,* and *Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through –Lam 3:44.* It is often in such stressful conditions that God chooses to hide Himself in a cloud. At these times, we grope through the thick foreboding fog in search of the pathway of light, but we find it not. In our discouragement, we may long for the beam of a cloudless day, but it eludes us. We know that God is in the midst of the mist, but we cannot apprehend Him, nor see His blessedness. *With clouds he covereth the light; and commandeth it not to shine by the cloud that cometh betwixt –Job 36:32.*

Why would our God, who loves to commune with us, the vessels of His own creation, choose to hide Himself in a cloud? Why does He often hide His will from our searching and aching hearts? Our finite minds often wonder what glory could possibly arise from such a seemingly distant God, and ...*to what purpose is this waste –Mat 26:8.* While we would never expect it to be God's divine plan to leave us in a foggy stupor forever, it may be His will for a time. Like a stroll through the valley of the shadow of death, there can be eternal character wrought in the soul who has experienced a seasonal lack of clarity in their path. We are well aware that

the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day –Pro 4:18. Still, most of us have, at times, experienced the hopeless fog that surrounds our present and our future. In these times, we *meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noonday as in the night –Job 5:14.* In our bedraggled discouragement, we can easily lose sight of the goodness of God. Our resulting lack of thankfulness is a sure road to a host of other temptations, while the giant of despair rises overhead in an attempt to weaken our resistance to sin.

We know that *Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are –Jam 5:17.* Yet, few of us have ever experienced a victory as exhilarating as he did when he triumphed over the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. Still, many of us can well relate to the discouragement that followed as he came unto Horeb and lodged in a cave there. This is the same place as Mount Sinai where the first great mountain scene opened before us in the Scriptures. Then it was Moses who met God in the cloud. The law was given, and God's glory was so marvelously manifested *and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake –Heb 12:21.* This *mount that might be touched* was a formidable and intimidating mountain flanked by splintering dark granite peaks and stern ridges of indescribable grandeur. The bold and awful front of Horeb, rises in frowning majesty from twelve hundred to fifteen hundred feet in perpendicular height.

With Elijah's vision clouded over and his spirit ebbing away at an all-time low, God responded to him in astounding methodology—*...And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out... –1 Kin 19:11-13.*

Somehow, we have come to believe that an earthshaking experience is the epitome of God's manifest presence. We reckon that God was closer to Elijah on Mt. Carmel than He was on Mt. Horeb. It was Elijah's "day in the sun" while speaking on Mt. Carmel. He chided the people and mocked the prophets. He preached boldly in the name of the Lord and commanded the people to repent of their duplicity. But now his voice has been silenced and he is listening ... listening to the still small voice calling into account his own actions and ambitions. Thus, if we will but stop and listen, the memory of our dismal failures will escort us to the front porch of our Lord, rather than allow us to glory in our perceived successes.

This is the blessed ministration of the cloud. It is often the

vehicle that the Lord will use to bring us to the place where we can truly receive His manifest glory in our hearts. This is not the white, fluffy, cumulus clouds of a balmy summer day but, rather, the flat and featureless stratus clouds that blanket the heavens from east to west and totally eclipse all the rays of heavenly sunshine. They can enshroud the day at high noon with an arsenal of gloom that rankles our hearts to the core. The little things, that on other days had little effect on our attitudes, now seem to tower as giants before us. We may face advents that we know are beyond our control, but our minds refuse to enter into rest. In times like these, if there happens to be an unfortunate soul on the other end of our conversation experiencing a similar plight, we may experience firsthand that *...man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward –Job 5:7.* At other times, our melancholy mood may be content to withdraw and feed itself with our own reclusive pity and foggy misery.

Some, in their desperation, turn to medication for the mind and there find a limited valve of relief. But God has not brought us into the cloud so that we may seek the help of physicians and psychologists. The ministration of the cloud is to shut off all other alternatives so that we may receive of Him the full blessedness of His consolation. God is willing that we should sacrifice the shimmering sunshine of today for the fullness of His presence tomorrow.

Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away –Jas 4:14. In bygone years, I have preached on this verse, exhorting souls concerning the brevity of life and encouraging them to not squander their years away. But I had totally ignored the foundation of it—*ye know not what shall be on the morrow.* This, perhaps, seems trite to the young at heart, but as the fruit of my age continues to ripen, I have a growing appreciation for the common and obvious idioms. Our modern scientific world is so adamantly pursuing the **love of life** that it cannot appreciate the **life of love** that is begotten through suffering. While those who, in ages past, suffered in the flesh and ceased from sin (1 Pet 4:1), I see no reason why those who experience the frail sufferings of a clouded mind may not share the same glory if they will but endure and trust to God the results.

We are an arrogant people who lean on the predictions of tomorrow. We fancy that we can plan our retirement and schedule our life events with immaculate detail. The weather forecasters tell us of tomorrows temperature so that we can meticulously plan our day. Our insurance gives assurance that we will not be subject to future poverty. Our freezers and bank accounts are full enough to see us well past tomorrow, and we have grown accustomed to believing that we *...sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no*

sorrow –Rev 18:7. Yet the sorrow of heart cannot be so easily absolved by earthly amenities. Our life is a *vapour* (cloud) because we ...*know not what shall be on the morrow...* –Jas 4:14. In spite of all our technology we still cannot absolve that fact. It is here that we must lay aside all our intuitions, expectations, and ambitions of what our life ought to be and find our God in the cloud.

He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it –Job 26:9. To what benefit is the cloud covering the face of God's throne? If it were easily beholden, most of us would be content to dwell with Him from afar. However, due to the impending fog, we must draw nigh to experience His fullness. How thankful we ought to be that it is thus, for how devastating would be our spiritual loss if it were not so.

If our self-sufficient life was always vibrantly full and God were easily apprehended, we would lose...

...Faith

We seek a guarantee that our trials will end happily ever after and that our prayers will naturally become unnecessary. In faith, we believe in God's provision, but the fact that we know not what a day will bring demands that we fall upon our feeble knees and pray. There may be many things that make it hard for us to trust in God, but the shrouded tomorrow makes it easier. Researchers have spent millions in their efforts to control the weather. They have sown every imaginable cloud seed into the air in efforts to produce rain clouds. After reviewing 40 years of cloud-seeding efforts in an area north of Israel, researchers at Tel Aviv University have concluded that cloud seeding doesn't actually produce any additional precipitation. How thankful we should be. The more we can control the unknown morrow, the less faith in the Master of the Universe we need.

Jacob, in leaving behind an angry brother, a disappointed father, and a severed tie with his mother, faced an altogether unknown future. This is a part of the ladder to the throne and it fortifies our commitment to our omnipotent God. Now we know in part and we see in part. Perhaps that fractional sliver brings us more inner wealth than if the whole were fully understood. If our future were amply within our manipulative power, we would formulate a perfect utopia supplied with the perfect number of children living sumptuously in the perfect home supported by the perfect job surrounded by perfect behavior that is perfectly sterile and dead.

...Hope

I question if we realize how deeply our debt is to the unexpected. The Hebrew writer declares our hope to be ... *an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast...* –Heb 6:19. Children are happy because they have big dreams. Often the

anticipation and planning of an event is almost as thrilling as the excursion itself. Every day is a bright new window to the unspoiled, hopeful mind. Experiences can often bring us to the brink of cynicism and bitterness when viewed through yesterday's disappointments. Jacob, upon the marvelous reunification with his son, Joseph, still remarked, *few and evil have been my days*. Though it is naturally so, it needs not to be. Paul states ...*that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope* –Rom 5:3-4. Surely, if we knew what was in store tomorrow (both good and evil) the invigorating element of hope would dwindle. Eve feigned that life would be better if she could only secure more knowledge. But what blessed hope was forfeited in her lustful pursuit of clarity.

...Love

There is a wistful tenderness in love that nothing but uncertainty can give. It is uncertain wonder that encompasses the way of a young man with a maid. The unknown perils of tomorrow drive a mother to love and prayer for her children. It is the vision of a brighter tomorrow for his family that moves a father to diligence in his daily work. Wherever a husband and his wife are knit together in Biblical oneness of holy matrimony, the mystery that envelops tomorrow is like the minor chord in a great melody. It speaks in joy of a suggested sorrow and brightens sorrow with encircling joy. Would Jacob's seven-year wait have seemed like a few days if he had known what the morrow would bring? If we knew everything, love would be too hard. If we knew everything, love would be too easy. If we knew everything, we would be brokenhearted. If we knew everything, we would be unconcerned. In other words, it makes us stronger to not know the worst and it makes us more tender to not know the best. For in our clouded and darkened lens there ...*abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity* –1 Cor 13:13.

It is no coincidence that while the disciples ...*beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight* – Act 1:9. And so we dare not be surprised that, at times, we shall be called to suffer the mental strain and stress of an obscure and unknown tomorrow. ...*For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away* –Jas 4:14. There is coming a day when we shall ...*see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory* –Luk 21:27. And again it is written, *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him ... Even so, Amen* –Rev 1:7.





When Mothers Concede

Anna L. Martin
Perkins, OK

“**W**hat are plain mothers of today telling their daughters about the carousel of cosmetics proffered for women?” This is a question I have pondered many times as I observe the girls in the church benches grow into womanhood. My wonder is weighted with concern. Listen in with me as two sisters talk about this topic.

“What do you do about things like a touch of acne cover-up or even make-up?” Minnie asked the sister sitting across the table from her. “Would you let your girls use them?”

This wasn’t exactly a normal tea-time topic. Krista tightened inside, wondering where Minnie might be going with this question. “What do you mean?” she replied. “Make-up...what do you mean by that? I guess that’s not something I’ve considered as an option for our girls. Now something to cover acne seems different to me. I’ve used that myself, and I’m a mom!”

Minnie chuckled with Krista over her sheepish confession before explaining herself. “When I was a young woman, I didn’t struggle with wanting to wear perfume or jewelry or even make-up. But now...my girls keep asking about things,

and I’m not sure what to tell them. Recently a question came up about Ava and her struggle with her pale complexion. My oldest daughter said, ‘You know, Mom, if those of us with dark complexions pluck our eyebrows so they don’t stand out as much, is it any worse if Ava darkens hers? You know, just to add a little character to her face. Or maybe just a dab of color on her cheeks. Some of us wear acne cover up. What’s the difference? Is there any harm in that?’”

Krista nodded and shrugged in one expressive, noncommittal movement. “I can understand that reasoning.”

Minnie’s responsive shrug and nod looked a lot like Krista’s as she continued with her story. “I can see their point, too. I told the girls I don’t know; maybe it doesn’t matter as much as I thought it did. And besides, when I look around at the rest of our young women, I see the same things. I kind of wonder if I’ve changed, or if the times have changed, or what. I don’t remember seeing these things in the church when I was younger.”

Krista nodded again, this time with certainty. But Minnie had more to say. “It was the same way when the girls wanted

to start wearing body sprays and perfumes. My husband didn't want them to, and neither did I, but I didn't have a good reason to tell them not to. It's hard because when you let the oldest one do one thing, it gets passed on down the line. I still don't like it, but I tell myself it's probably just

...these things young women were using lately weren't really dangerous. Or were they?

my personality to not like scents..." Her voice hung uncertainly between the two women, then she shrugged off a closing comment. "It's not like it's dangerous or anything."

Krista nodded again, anxious to get the subject changed. She didn't have answers, and Minnie's conclusion was simple enough: these things young women were using lately weren't really dangerous. Or were they?

This incident was occupying my mind the morning after I heard about it when my small son crowed just a little too happily. His tone tugged my attention into the kitchen where he rocked on a rickety chair. He waved a serrated knife in the air, laden with apple cake crumbs, burbling about his victory in reaching such an item. My dismay tried to stir me from my chair, but I laid a staying hand over my concern. He was so happy, after all. I had just sat down for what felt like the first time in the morning and I hardly had the energy for another battle—even just a battle with a baby over a knife. I felt like I had been waging battles all morning, maybe all my motherhood.

It wasn't that dangerous, surely. He'd lay it down in a moment and go on to do something else. What were the odds he would actually fall and get hurt? And he was plainly pleased to experiment with his ability to reach things hitherto forbidden. It felt good to see him happy. (What is it in our mother-hearts that irresistibly, sometimes unreasonably, responds to seeing our children happy?)

His eyes glittered with triumph as he held the knife over the cake pan, pushing his tummy against the table edge in order to get a few more oh-so-sweet crumbs. The chair began scooting out from under his fat little legs. Should I take the moment to teach another lesson or should I take the chance he wouldn't get hurt?

The thought of the serrated edge and his ignorant pink tongue won out. There are dangers in this big world he

can't imagine, reasons for the boundaries set around him he doesn't comprehend. But his mother knows. I understand what knives are for. They are tools and they are not for children.

This is a call for us mothers. This is a plea for ladies to recognize the dangers of these entrapments. This is for ones who have tasted the sweet, crumbly edge of this world's tools for women. *This is for those of us with daughters.*

What are we teaching them? What are we saying to them when they beg for that first bottle of body spray? What is our response when they appear for the third or three-hundredth time with their hair nattily arranged in a style we know our husbands do not approve of? What do we do when they pull a snug little shrug from the sweater rack and say, "Aw, Mom, you're just outdated...?"

The body spray turns into perfume, and the perfume gets louder until it brazenly wears titles a married woman should blush to see, let alone a young girl possess. The hairstyles ebb and flow with the trends, drooping here a little, curling there a little, and—God forbid—occasionally glinting with highlights. The shrugs get tighter, and the sleeves get shorter until it becomes hard to see there is a plain dress under the layers of pullover knits.

And you respond, *maybe it's not as dangerous as I thought it was.* What is this? Is it the surrendering sigh of a mother unable to pass her principles on to her teenage daughters? Perhaps, like me, you also find it challenging to take time for the baby of



the family. The knife in his hand, after all, makes him happy. And that is refreshing after a morning of tantrums. Besides, you know how yummy cake crumbs are. It's not like it's really dangerous or anything.

He might pierce his tongue or stab out his eye, but otherwise, the risks are low.

The Bible says *...it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire* –Mar 9:47. This is a hard gospel. (We weren't promised an easy one.) But the beginning of the verse offers an obvious yet often overlooked escape route—if something causes you to offend, or be offended, cast it far from you.

The context of that verse is Jesus' words on offending the little ones. Do your daughters fall outside that label? Have you taught them to cast away the worldly enticements that, long term, will offend their eternal souls? The word offend is easy to read over, yet it is piled with portent. Earlier in the chapter, Jesus references it with words like "millstone" and "woe."

I am proposing that we mothers are responsible in this offending by failing to teach our little ones—our girls—about true womanly adornment. *But let it [the adornment] be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves...* –1Pe 3:4-5. That millstone word applies to each of us. Jesus says, *...woe to that [wo]man by whom the offence cometh!* –Mat 18:7. He emphasizes this statement in Scripture with an uncharacteristic exclamation point.

If the mothers and women who once chose to abstain from habits which belong to women of the world don't have enough reason for their daughters to do the same, hope is extinguished for the future modesty of our churches. Today, the embers flicker uncertainly as fellow coals grow cold. The plain churches as a whole are on a terrible slide of immodesty, both inside and out. *Who is a wise [wo]man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom* –Jas 3:13.

The worldly woman's trappings are tools of the enemy and they are not for the children of God.

This is a plea, a call, for us mothers to stand up. Are we brave enough, committed enough, to teach the younger women the serrated dangers of this lustful world?

All around us in the church is the evidence of mothers who are on break. Mothers rocking serenely, happy to see

their children happy. Their conviction and fight for truth evaporated somewhere between the first and last child. Our children will pay for this offense.

Our girls need answers. Young women need intentional guidance. Newlyweds need rebuke when they start getting off track. The downward spiral of decaying standards is about to spin with a vengeance as young-married sisters begin to raise a new generation of daughters on Pinterest and pedicures. Hoping they won't get hurt is not going to cut it.

The principles of holy living for a Christian woman have not changed. Neither has the sin that motivates the world. What, then, has changed? We as sisters have lost sight of the clear difference that God says should exist between the women of God and the women of this world.

For the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ, let's take a stand and be a teacher of good things. Whatever our stage in life, there is a younger woman coming behind us. Let us teach them *...that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world* –Tit 2:12.





A Princess of God

A princess of God!
It's a calling sublime
That merits my giving
Of talent and time
To grow in the glory
Of what He would make--
My Father, the King,
Will all ugliness take
Away from my heart,
That it tarnish no more
And bring me the jewels
That He has in store.

A princess of God!
It's a calling to live
A life that to others
Around me would give
A diamond of hope,
A desire for God,
The truth of salvation
By Jesus' shed blood.
A call to live godly
In Jesus Christ,
Adorned with His meekness
And clothed with His light.

by Rebecca Weber

The Heartbeat of
The Remnant

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Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be
glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation
say continually, The LORD be magnified.

Psalm 40:16